

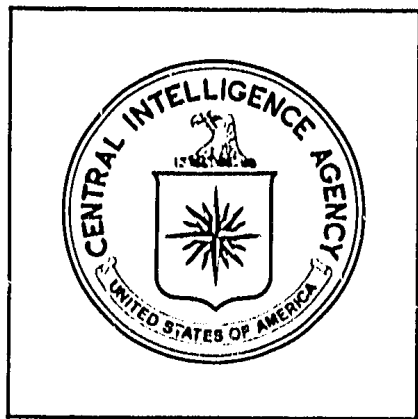
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STAFF NOTES:

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Moscow Views Italian Election Results

The Soviets have thus far said little about the Italian election results beyond reporting the facts in their media. But in evaluating the pluses and the minuses of the gains made by the Italian Communists, Moscow is likely to see the balance on the plus side of the ledger. The Soviets will claim that the Italian party's gains are new evidence of a world-wide leftward trend, and an example of what is politically possible in Western Europe under the umbrella of detente.

Moscow will also find the Italian results useful in rebutting the argument of Western communist parties that the behavior of the Portuguese party threatens their own prospects. This will have the effect of weakening one argument against more forthright Soviet backing of the Portuguese Communists. The reaction in Western Europe as a whole to the Italian Communist gains will, however, be far more important in the Soviet assessment about how far it can safely go in supporting Cunhal. The Soviets will want to do what they can to play the Italian results in such a way as to diminish the possibility of a West European backlash.

The election will pose other problems for the Soviets in dealing with Western parties. One lesson that the latter may draw is that they still have to follow Berlinguer's open criticism of the Portuguese in order to match his electoral performance. Furthermore, the election outcome could be interpreted as a mandate for the Italian Communist Party's advocacy of participation in the parliamentary process, including participation in coalition governments--a policy that has never elicited great enthusiasm in Moscow. The Italian communists have been relatively

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independent of Moscow, and the election results may encourage other parties to follow their example. The Italians will also be in a stronger position to argue their case for the independence of the parties in the preparatory meetings now under way for a European communist party conference.

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Yugoslavia Cool to Greek Proposals

Greek proposals for increased multilateral cooperation in the Balkans are receiving a polite hearing in Belgrade, but the Yugoslavs remain wary of regional schemes.

Premier Karamanlis vigorously pushed the regionalism cause in talks with Tito and Premier Bijedic during an official visit to Yugoslavia two weeks ago. Yugoslav speeches and the communique from the trip all suggest that Belgrade although reluctant to throw cold water on Karamanlis' efforts was unenthusiastic about the Greek proposal.

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The Yugoslavs want no part of stratagems that might further destabilize the region and offer Moscow new opportunities to increase its influence there.

Since the late 1950s, Belgrade has consistently rebuffed proposals for regional cooperation, including those from its close friends in Bucharest. Tito has insisted that Yugoslav relations with the Balkan countries be conducted on a bilateral basis, primarily because Yugoslavia has such a wide diversity of problems

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with its neighbors that multilateral schemes might restrict its flexibility. Bulgaria's potential role as a Soviet Trojan horse in any regional councils also contributes to Yugoslav reticence.

Athens, however, appears determined to push its regional message, and Karamanlis will presumably continue his campaign when he visits Sofia in July. If, as seems likely, the Bulgarians respond warmly to his initiatives, Yugoslavia will probably dig in its heels even more firmly.

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USSR Media on US Political Situation

There continue to be signs in Soviet propaganda lectures and less authoritative periodicals of skepticism about the Ford administration's ability to surmount an array of economic and political handicaps by November 1976.

It is unlikely, however, that the Soviets who know that they have been wrong about US politics before, have come to any firm conclusion that there will be a new administration in 1977. Nor are they likely, at this early juncture, to change policies on the basis of their preliminary thinking about US electoral politics.

The most recent discussion of the US political scene appeared last weekend in the weekly newspaper *So Rubezhom*. Citing the opinions of US observers, the editor-in-chief argues that the US political system has been partially paralyzed by a variety of economic and political troubles that have split the White House and Congress. The Democrats, he says, are gaining strength because of their backing for Israel; the Republicans, virtually destroyed by Watergate, are incurring further losses as a result of their support for the unpopular cause of Vietnam.

The journalist quotes from US editors to the effect that the upshot of this situation will be a new president in 1977, probably a Democrat. The author shows no special enthusiasm for this prospect, commenting that there is little hope the Democratic Party will find the leadership the US so badly needs.

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USSR - East Germany: Economic Discussions

Economic problems appear to have dominated the meeting on Tuesday between East German party chief Honecker and Soviet party chief Brezhnev.

Honecker probably sought assurances that Moscow would help to ease the economic difficulties facing the East Germans because of lagging exports and the sharply increased cost of imported Soviet raw materials. Soviet press reports on the visit say the two leaders emphasized the importance of coordinating the five year plans now in preparation in both countries. Soviet efforts to gain greater East European economic integration during the 1976-80 planning period will probably also be discussed at next week's CEMA meeting in Budapest. The two leaders probably covered plans for the congresses both parties will hold next year. Favorable prospects for the European security conference and the Vienna force reduction talks were mentioned in the communique. There was no mention, however, of the European communist meeting, which will eventually be held in East Berlin.

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Dolanc Says Centralists Now Primary
Threat to Yugoslav Stability

Stane Dolanc, second to Tito in the party leadership, on Monday warned a Belgrade meeting that "centralists"--proponents of imitating the Soviet model--are now a more dangerous faction than the liberal reformers, who have been on the defensive since the purges of 1972-73.

Dolanc told Belgrade's political leadership that the liberals are under control and now present "no real danger of any kind." On the other hand, he said that the acute economic situation offers opportunities to those who advocate a thoroughly centralized and bureaucratic system. He reminded his audience that Yugoslavia broke with this concept when Tito defied Stalin in 1948, and he urged an intensified ideological and political struggle against the remaining strongholds of centralist sympathy.

The Yugoslavs broadcast a slightly abridged version of the Dolanc comments to Moscow. Belgrade radio dropped Dolanc's reference to liberals posing no real menace, but did include his warning that dogmatists were the main threat.

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Albania: New Names Appear

The Albanian press on June 1 listed Llambi Gegprifti as a new member of the Albanian Workers' Party Politburo. His exact status--full member or alternate--was not, however, indicated.

Gegprifti, who became deputy defense minister last year after the ouster of former defense minister Balluku, may have been promoted to the Politburo during a Central Committee plenum in late May. Premier Shehu who is already on the Politburo has taken the Defense Ministry portfolio.

Several other personnel shifts have surfaced in the Albania press. Deputy Premier Petro Dode now also holds the post of chairman of the state planning commission, replacing Abdyl Kellezi, who has probably joined the ranks of the purged. Albanian media have not mentioned Kellezi since January 28. Party journals have also identified Pali Miska as minister of mines, filling the slot left vacant by the removal of Koco Theodhosi.

Meantime, Ramiz Alia, the party's chief ideologue and cultural expert, reappeared on June 16 at a Tirana reception for the Cambodian foreign minister. Alia's absence from public view for nearly three months had sparked rumors that he too had been purged.

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